JUST DROP THE PUCK, ALREADY!

WITH THE LOCKOUT-SHORTENED NHL SEASON SET TO BEGIN SATURDAY, METRO TAKES A LOOK AT WHAT'S AHEAD PAGES 12 & 13

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Dear Mr. President: Wall urges Obama to approve Keystone XL

Joint letter sent to White House. Premier, U.S. governors tout pipeline's role in 'future economic prosperity' of both countries

JEFF MACKEY
jeff.mackey@metronews.ca

Premier Brad Wall and 10 U.S. governors are hoping they've given U.S. President Barack Obama something to think about as he continues to mull over his options regarding the Keystone XL pipeline.

The group of leaders sent a joint letter to Obama on Thursday urging him to approve the controversial pipeline.

In the letter the premier and the governors note the pipeline is "fundamentally important to the future economic prosperity of both the United States and Canada."

The pipeline has become a divisive issue in the U.S and Canada. While many point to the economic benefits of such a pipeline, others have expressed concern about the environmental impact of such a project.

The pipeline would transport oil from Hardisty, Alta., through southwest Saskatchewan to Steele City, Neb., and then on to the Gulf Coast. The president could rule on a revised application for the pipeline in the first quarter of 2013.

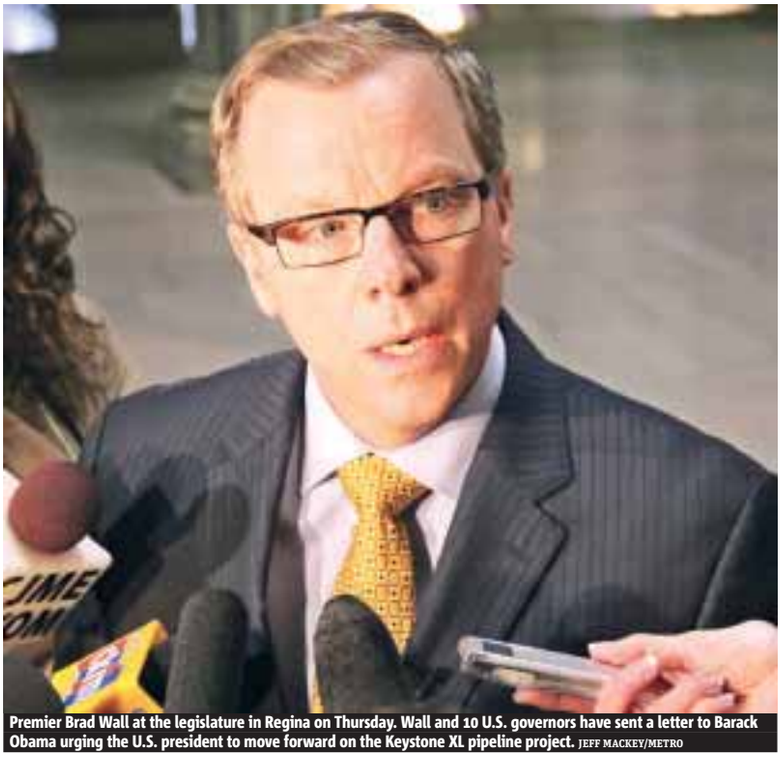
"We wanted to work together with our partners in the United States and put forward what we think is a very compelling case for the U.S. administration to approve Keystone," said Wall at the legislature on Thursday.

Alberta Premier Alison Redford was not among the politicians who signed the letter, but Wall said he doesn't see a problem with that. Redford has been working hard on the file and Saskatchewan wanted to do its part, he said.

"I think this is helpful where you have the province of Saskatchewan, with a real stake in the project, also taking a bit of a lead and so we're happy to do that," he said.

A spokesman for Redford said in an email to The Canadian Press that he did not believe she had been specifically asked to sign the letter.

WITH FILES FROM THE CANADIAN PRESS


Premier Brad Wall at the legislature in Regina on Thursday. Wall and 10 U.S. governors have sent a letter to Barack Obama urging the U.S. president to move forward on the Keystone XL pipeline project. JEFF MACKEY/METRO

HIW to come out swinging

Reginans, get ready for 'a testosterone-fuelled soap opera' — High Impact Wrestling Canada's first show of the year takes place at the Victoria Club Friday PAGE 3

Serve waffles the savoury, soul-food way

Top 'em with Southern-style chicken and gravy for a deliciously different brunch dish PAGE 10

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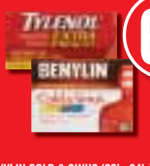

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Friday night's all right for fighting for these Regina pro wrestlers

Ready to rumble.
It's Thryllin Dylan vs. Robbie Gamble on Friday's ticket

ALYSSA MCDONALD
alyssa.mcdonald@metronews.ca

Regina wrestler Thryllin' Dylan, in the air, will fight heavyweight champion Robbie Gamble at High Impact Wrestling's first show of the year on Friday night. CONTRIBUTED/GREG RIVETT

High Impact Wrestling Canada's first show of the year features fights, tights and over-dramatics.

"Its almost a testosterone-fuelled soap opera," HIW owner Mike Roberts says.

He says HIW's brand of pro-wrestling is much like the professional wrestling you see on TV and with World Wrestling Entertainment, complete with the zany outfits and flips off the ropes. HIW has been based in Regina for more than 15 years and also runs a training centre. It usually holds one or two shows a month and tours around Saskatchewan and other Prairie provinces.

"It's a great, entertaining show and a really good display of athleticism as well," Roberts says.

At the shows, some 20 to 25 wrestlers grapple for the High Impact Heavyweight title, though Roberts says most are fighting their way up the ladder simply to qualify for a spot in the final fight of the show.

"There are winners and losers. Sometimes they will get a little out of control and they will both be disqualified. It can get pretty chaotic at times," Roberts says.

Friday night's show features a heavyweight title matchup between 14-year veteran Thryllin' Dylan and current champion Robbie Gamble. It will also see a "return" of someone Roberts refers to as "a local legend."

Roberts says the HIW has built a loyal following in Saskatchewan and is expecting about 200 people for the 8 p.m. Friday show, called Darkness Falls, at its home venue, the Victoria Club.

Feds, province fund aboriginal job-skills program

Rob Norris, MLA for Saskatoon Greystone, speaks at a press conference at Cameco Corp. on Thursday afternoon to announce funding that will help 800 First Nations people in Saskatchewan train for high-demand jobs in the mining industry. MORGAN MODJESKI/METRO IN SASKATOON

With the aim of helping aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan obtain long-term employment, Ottawa and the province have announced some $9.4 million in funding for Northern Career Quest (NCQ).

At a press conference on Thursday at Cameco Corp. in Saskatoon, MP Rob Clarke (Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River) said $7.9 million will be contributed to NCQ through the federal Skills and Partnership Fund. The provincial ministry of the economy will pitch in the remaining $1.5 million.

"It's looking at First Nations, Métis and Inuit about providing the funding for the main purpose for economic development, and that's through job skills and training," Clarke said. "The federal government has really made a concerted effort to look at economic growth for the Canadian economy … and aboriginal people out there are going to participate and become major contributors."

A press release says the NCQ will provide classroom and on-site training in the mining industry. Over a period of two years, 800 participants will be trained for high-demand positions such as mine technicians and heavy-equipment operators.

Rob Norris, the MLA for Saskatoon Greystone, said the new investment in NCQ will help address Saskatchewan's labour shortage.

"This is an opportunity of a lifetime," Norris said. "There are more than 10,000 jobs open and available in Saskatchewan today. So by making sure that more people in Saskatchewan — especially our First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan — have increased access to skills, training and education, that learning component, then they'll also have access to the earning component."

The NCQ will also be partly funded by industry partners including Cameco, Areva and Northlands College.

MORGAN MODJESKI/
METRO IN SASKATOON

Health care

Patients waiting less time for surgery in Saskatchewan

Wait times for surgery continued to fall in November, the province says.

The latest statistics show about 300 fewer people had to wait more than six months for surgery that month, compared to October 2012.

Since November 2007, the number of people waiting more than half a year for surgery has dropped 60 per cent to 4,271.

A total of 54,853 surgeries had been performed as of the end of November 2012.

The government has set a goal of reducing wait times for surgery to three months or less by April 2014.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/CTV REGINA

Food and arts fest

Developing a taste for Cathedral

Nine Cathedral Village restaurants are raising money for the Cathedral Village Arts Festival with a gourmet tasting, silent auction and live music. The event starts at 6 p.m. on Saturday at the Italian Club. Tickets are $20 and available from Argento Jewellery and Dessart Sweets, both on 13th Avenue. ALYSSA MCDONALD/METRO

Police investigation

Missing woman's body found at Shoal Lake

RCMP are not ruling out foul play in the death of a Saskatchewan woman who had not been seen by her family since Christmas Eve.

The body of Emiline Marie Kitchener, 34, was discovered by volunteer searchers in a field on the Shoal Lake First Nation, about 90 kilometres east of Nipawin.

A family friend reported seeing Kitchener in a Nipawin bar on Jan. 4.

Her family reported her missing last Saturday, a day after her cellphone was noted to be active in the Saskatoon area.

Police say Kitchener had possible ties to Sturgeon Lake, Sask., and The Pas, Man.

An autopsy is scheduled.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Terror-case Canadian gets 14-year jail term

He's cleared of most serious charge. Man with links to Toronto and Ottawa convicted of supporting group behind Mumbai attacks

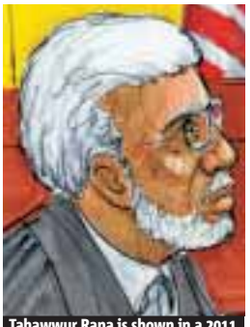
A Canadian businessman was sentenced to 14 years in prison on Thursday for providing material support to overseas terrorism.

It was alleged Tahawwur Rana supported a Pakistani group whose 2008 attacks on Mumbai, India, left more than 160 people dead.

The judge sentenced Rana in a Chicago court to the prison term followed by five years of supervised release.

Rana, a 52-year-old Pakistani-born Canadian, faced a maximum 30 years in prison.

Jurors in 2011 convicted him of providing support for the Pakistani group Lashkar-e-Taiba, and for supporting a never-carried-out plot to attack a Danish newspaper that printed cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in 2005.



Tahawwur Rana is shown in a 2011 courtroom sketch. TOM GIANNI/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The cartoons angered many Muslims because pictures of the prophet are prohibited in Islam.

But jurors cleared Rana of the third and most serious charge of involvement in the three-day rampage in Mumbai, India's largest city, which has often been called India's 9-11.

The government's star witness at Rana's trial was admitted terrorist David Coleman Headley, who had pleaded guilty to laying the groundwork for the Mumbai attacks.

The American-Pakistani testified against his school friend Rana to avoid the death penalty and extradition.

He is scheduled to be sentenced in Chicago next week.

Headley spent five days on the witness stand — taking up more than half the trial — detailing how he allegedly worked for both the Pakistani intelligence agency known as the ISI and Lashkar.

Prosecutors also presented Rana's videotaped arrest statement to the FBI, during which he said he knew Headley had trained with Lashkar. They also played a September 2009 recorded phone conversation between the men.

Rana — who owned an immigration consulting firm in Toronto and a home in Ottawa — was accused of allowing Headley to open a branch of his Chicago-based immigration law business in Mumbai as a cover story and travel as a representative of the company in Denmark.

In court, a travel agent showed how Rana booked travel for Headley.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Fracking fuss. Yoko Ono takes son Sean Lennon on a protest over drilling

Yoko Ono, Sean Lennon and actress Susan Sarandon spoke out against fracking — a drilling technique — during a tour of natural-gas drilling sites in northeastern Pennsylvania on Thursday.

The celebrities said the technique is a danger to air, water and human health.

Ono accused the gas industry of disregarding residents' welfare. "They care about making money," she said.

The celebs headed to rural Susquehanna County to see gas wells, compressor stations and other evidence of the Marcellus Shale drilling boom.

They also visited with residents who say they have been negatively impacted by drilling.

Fracking involves the high-pressure injection of millions of gallons of water, along with sand and chemical additives, deep underground to break apart shale rock and free the gas trapped inside it.

The industry and many federal and state officials say fracking is safe when it's done properly.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mother and son: Yoko Ono and Sean Lennon chat as they head to drilling sites in Pennsylvania on Thursday. RICHARD DREW/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

School staffer's claim

Boy, 13, accused of sex attack

A 13-year-old boy is facing charges after Peterborough, Ont., police allege a female staff member at an area school was choked and sexually assaulted.

Police say the woman said she was alone in a classroom with the boy when she was attacked.

He was charged with sexual assault and overcoming resistance to commit an indictable offence. He cannot be identified.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Public in danger?

B.C. gang wars worry police

Metro Vancouver police fear innocent bystanders may get hurt in the crossfire of what could be a return of gang-related violence in the region.

Since Sunday, nine people have died and five others have been injured in violent incidents.

RCMP Sgt. Peter Thiessen said: "The potential for innocent people to be hurt is high."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Provincial growth rates

Gap narrows between West and rest: BMO

Bank of Montreal says the gap between economic growth rates in Western Canada and the rest of the country appears to be narrowing. The resource sector continues to fuel growth in Western Canada, but the bank says it will be slower.

The bank suggests Alberta's growth in the energy sector is being tempered by a lack of pipeline capacity and B.C. has been held back by a softer housing market. By contrast, Ontario's economy is expected to gain momentum into 2014, helped by improvements in the U.S.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Online ticketing

Ticketfly to enter Canadian market

Canadian concertgoers may soon notice there's a new online ticketing company in town aiming to compete with Ticketmaster.

The San Francisco-based Ticketfly announced Thursday that it's expanding into Canada and has reached deals with national event promoter Union Events and Toronto-based Collective Concerts to sell tickets online.

Ticketfly claims it will charge lower fees than Ticketmaster for online purchases and will encourage e-ticketing via Apple's Passbook format. The company has also acquired Calgary-based ticketing company Prime Box Office as part of its move north.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

22 million songs

Amazon opens MP3 store to iPhone, iPod Touch users

Amazon says iPhone and iPod Touch users are now able to buy music from its digital store for the first time.

The company said its MP3 library has 22 million songs available. Steve Boom, vice-president of Amazon Music, says that since the launch of the Cloud Player app for the iPhone and iPod Touch, customers have been asking for the ability to buy music from Amazon directly from their devices.

Apple device users can browse Amazon's MP3 store for music using Apple's Safari web browser.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Government victory. Supreme Court will not hear challenge to wheat-board overhaul

The federal government scored another court victory Thursday in an ongoing battle over its changes to the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled it will not hear an appeal by eight former board directors, who accused the government of breaking its own law by making radical changes without first holding a plebiscite among grain producers.

New legislation introduced by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government strips the marketing agency of its monopoly on western wheat and barley sales.

As is its usual practice, the high court did not release reasons for its decision. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz welcomed the ruling as "fantastic."

"It turns the page, lets farmers get on with what they do best, which is produce those great high-quality crops," Ritz told Regina radio station CKRM.

It is not the end of the legal battle. Supporters of the wheat board as it was prior to the change have filed a separate lawsuit in Federal Court. They said the Supreme Court rejection will not deter them.

"We have a class-action underway and that action is based on a variety of legal theories that are quite different from what was argued in the case ... that went to the Supreme Court of Canada," said Anders Bruun, a spokesman for the Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board.

The lawsuit seeks a court order to restore the board's monopoly and to give farmers $17 billion in damages.

The wheat-board monopoly had forced western producers to sell through the board since the 1940s — unlike their counterparts in other parts of the country.

Supporters said the single-desk approach ensured better prices and prevented farmers from competing against each other for sales. But many producers opposed the monopoly and the Conservatives had promised for a long time to allow farmers to sell to whomever they chose.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"(The ruling) turns the page, lets farmers get on with what they do best."

Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz

Market Minute

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TSX 12,674.73 (+65.91)

OIL $95.49 US (+$1.25)

GOLD $1,690.80 US (+$7.60)

Britain says neigh to eating horsemeat

'Horse burger' scandal. Tesco supermarket chain amps up damage control in wake of discovery that meat products contained up to 29% equine flesh

Putting the cart before the horse? An employee pushes shopping carts past the entrance to a Tesco Extra supermarket in New Malden, Surrey, England, in this 2009 photo. The Tesco chain has had to apologize to Britons after horsemeat was discovered in some of its burgers. GETTY IMAGES FILE

In Britain, a horse is a horse — not a main course. Tesco, the country's biggest supermarket chain, took out full-page newspaper ads Thursday to apologize for an unwanted ingredient in some of its hamburgers: Horsemeat.

Ten million burgers have been taken off shop shelves after the revelation that beef products from three companies in Ireland and Britain contained horse DNA. Most had only small traces, but one burger of a brand sold by Tesco had meat content that was 29 per cent horse. The contrite grocer told customers that "we and our supplier have let you down and we apologize."

Reaction to the scandal in Britain goes beyond concerns about contaminated food. While people in some countries happily dine on equine flesh, in the land of Black Beauty and National Velvet, the idea fills many with horror.

Labour Party environment spokeswoman Mary Creagh reflected the feelings of many when she said Thursday that eating horsemeat is "strongly culturally taboo in the United Kingdom." She was echoing prohibitions in Western cultures that go back to 732 AD, when Pope Gregory III declared horse-eating a pagan practice. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"Some people say, 'I have a horse. It'd be like eating my grandmother.'"

Paul Webb, director of Exotic Meats, a company in the English Midlands that sells products including horse burgers.

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HAPPINESS IS A WARM CONFESSION

THE LIST
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

It was the best of weeks, it was the worst of weeks.
And it's not even over.

1 **Lance backpedals on Oprah.** Lance Armstrong pedals an epic two-part confession that he did in fact use performance-enhancing drugs to win a record seven Tour de France titles. If he doesn't end up resurrecting his reputation, at least he's resurrecting Oprah's ratings. Hey, it's not about the bike. Obviously, it never was.

2 **Idle No More.** You can say that again. Aboriginal people are mad as hell and they're not going to take it anymore. So they're barricading roads and bridges to make their point. But the spontaneous uprising seems to be taking more out of aboriginal leaders such as hunger-striker Theresa Spence and Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo than original-target Stephen Harper, whose Teflon coating remains intact.

3 **Idol again!?** Hard to believe, but the talent show that started it all, American Idol, is in its 12th season. Unfortunately, it seems to have descended into a feud between Mariah Carey and Nicki Minaj, while the talent tries to get a few licks in edgewise. I never thought I'd say this, but what happened to the good old days, when professional A & R men identified The Next Big Thing?

4 **Happiness is a warm nutbar.** U.S. President Barack Obama unveils a package of gun-control measures, maintaining that weapons designed for a theatre of war have no place in a movie theatre, a reference to the mass shooting six months ago at a Colorado screening of The Dark Knight Rises. Gunslinger, er, Gov. Rick Perry of Texas angrily rejects any attempt to limit access to assault weapons and instead recommends that we "pray for help." It's worked so far …

5 **Madam, unhand that monkey.** In the inevitable court battle over who gets to keep Darwin the Ikea monkey, the people sheltering him have accused his erstwhile owner of, um, choking the monkey, hitting him with a wooden spoon, forcing him to live in a small crate and making him wear that ridiculous double-breasted shearling coat (OK, I added that last one). If God meant monkeys to go to Ikea, he would have supplied them with little Allen wrenches. Next case!

6 **Bad Dreamliners.** The entire fleet of Boeing 787s, the so-called Dreamliner, has been grounded as engineers try to figure out why the plane's batteries overheat. While they're at it, they should also figure out why I always have to sit between the crying baby and the 400-pound man.

7 **Happy birthday, Betty White.** If you're worried life has passed you by, consider Betty White. She turned 91 Thursday, but she's holding down a regular gig on Hot in Cleveland and this year launched Betty White's Off Their Rockers. Maybe you should Be Like Betty, and make today the first day of the rest of your life.

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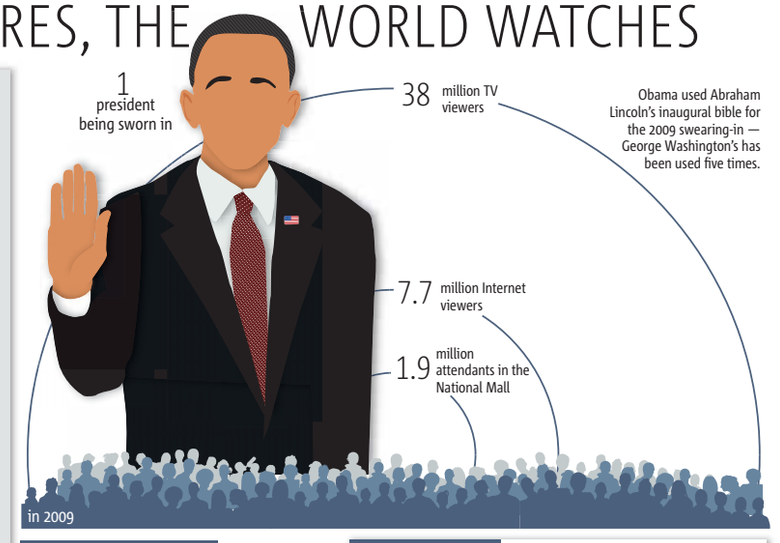
HE DECLARES, THE WORLD WATCHES


1 president being sworn in
38 million TV viewers
Obama used Abraham Lincoln's inaugural bible for the 2009 swearing-in — George Washington's has been used five times.
7.7 million Internet viewers
1.9 million attendants in the National Mall
in 2009

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE INAUGURATION?

JAN. 19

U.S. President Barack Obama and his family participate in a National Day of Service.

JAN. 20

Obama and Vice-President Joe Biden are officially sworn into office at a private event at the White House.

JAN. 21

- Obama, Biden and their families participate in a traditional prayer service at St. John's Church in front of the White House.
- Obama, Biden and their families ride to the Capitol. The public swearing-in ceremony takes place on a platform in front of the Capitol building.
- Biden is sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor.
- Obama is sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts.
- Obama delivers his inaugural address.
- Obama and Biden participate in an inaugural lunch with members of Congress.
- Evening: Inaugural Balls. The president and vice-president attend with their wives.

$4.2 million will be spent on preparing Capitol grounds for the swearing-in ceremony, mostly on the inaugural platform, bleachers and barricades.

SUNDAYS Inauguration Day is always Jan. 20, but by law inaugurations are never held on Sundays. Since Jan. 20 falls on a Sunday this year, the oath is then given privately on Sunday and then publicly on Monday.

35 is the amount of words in the oath for the most powerful job in the world, the U.S. presidency.

THE PRESIDENT'S RIDE

Barack Obama will travel in his armour-plated Cadillac One limousine to Capitol Hill for his inauguration. But cars weren't always the preferred mode of transport:

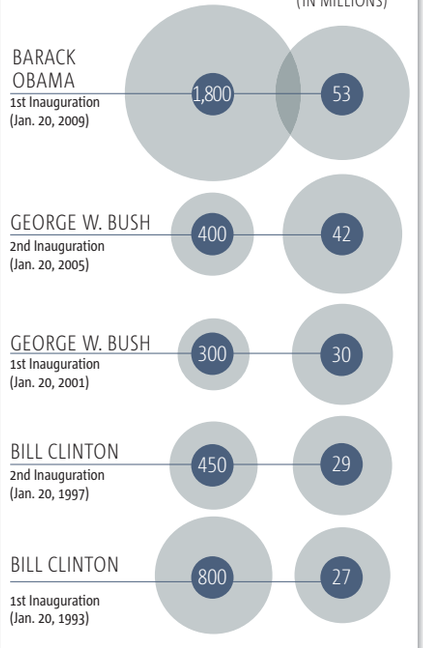
BY CARRIAGE
George Washington took a horse-drawn carriage to Federal Hall, New York City (April 30, 1789).

BY FOOT
Thomas Jefferson (March 4, 1801) walked to his swearing-in from his lodgings less than 300 metres from Capitol Hill.

BY TRAIN
William Harrison (March 4, 1841) travelled to the Capitol by railroad from Virginia (an inaugural first).

AIRPLANE
Lyndon Johnson (Nov. 22, 1963) took his oath inside Air Force One, grounded at Dallas Love Field airport.

PAST INAUGURATIONS



TEXT: METRO WORLD NEWS; GRAPHIC: MIA KORAB; METRO WORLD NEWS
SOURCES: 2013PIC.ORG, CBS, CNN, FEC, JOINT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ON INAUGURAL CEREMONIES, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, NIELSEN WIRE

Worth mentioning

Dear Abby advice columnist dies at 94

Pauline Friedman Phillips, who as Dear Abby dispensed snappy, sometimes saucy advice on love, marriage and meddling mothers-in-law to millions of newspaper readers around the world and opened the way for the likes of Dr. Ruth, Dr. Phil and Oprah, has died. She was 94.

Phillips died Wednesday in Minneapolis after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, said Gene Willis, a publicist for the Universal Uclick syndicate.

Pauline Friedman Phillips GETTY IMAGES

"My mother leaves very big high heels to fill with a legacy of compassion, commitment and positive social change," her daughter, Jeanne Phillips, who now writes the column, said in a statement.

Pauline Phillips wrote under the name Abigail Van Buren. Her column competed for decades with the advice of Ann Landers, written by her twin sister, Esther Friedman Lederer. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Metropolitan Panel

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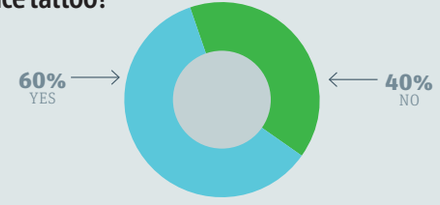

Twitter

@ShinfoForDays: I come up with the best tweets while driving. But I know @reginapolice disapproves, so I pull over.

@AllDayWong: The Regina Inn is having a hotel liquidation sale. Cheap (partially soiled) mattresses everyone! #yqr

@Rhino_Bob: Ironic how ppl complaining about a march blocking #YQR traffic have 0 qualms about sitting in a traffic lane for 10 minutes waiting for Tims

@ryanholota: Drove past the Keystone Pipeline today. Still not leaking.

@Heather4Regina: Love all the talk about the #yqr stadium but my big question downtown peeps is whether our @lululemon is open yet ?!

metro
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Dame Maggie Smith stars in Quartet — a story of a once famous singing group now retired and living together. HANDOUT

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE AND MARK BRESLIN

Aging a little too well

Crowd pleaser. The Reel Guys agreed Quartet was a nice look at old age, but ultimately couldn't stomach the ending

Richard: Mark, this could have gone one of two ways. It could've been a depressing look at the difficulties of growing old, or it could have turned into one of those "loveable old coot" movies. Instead, like the recent The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, it treats its elderly characters like vibrant, real people, even though they use walkers and have lapses of memory. Medical conditions aside, emotionally they are as rich — if not richer — than 90 per cent of the characters we see in any Katherine Heigl romantic comedy. What did you think?

Mark: Richard, they are lovable old coots, or at least high-functioning geezers. It's an idyllic view of old age — everyone has money and talent, and only a little bit of dementia, a wisp of a stroke, or a slightly malfunctioning hip. If they showed what old age was really like, the movie would be unwatchable. The great thing about the movie is the cast — and what a cast! Could Billy Connolly be more charming? Tom Courtenay more noble? Maggie Smith more ... Maggie Smith? But the film falls down in the storytelling. There's just not enough there. If you're going to cast these legends of stage and screen, you need to give them more to do.

RC: It is predictable, just this side of twee and don't get me started about the unsatisfying ending. Luckily it's also a crowd pleaser due to the chemistry of the cast. I loved Billy Connolly's roguishness and the sense of real warmth that exists between all the main players. That Dustin Hoffman learned a thing or two about directing actors over the years.

Synopsis

The action centres around Beechham House, a luxurious retirement home for aging musicians. Three quarters of a once famous vocal quartet, Reginald (Tom Courtenay), Cissy (Pauline Collins), and Wilfred (Billy Connolly), live there quietly until their former diva, Jean (Dame Maggie Smith), arrives. Her presence stirs up old feelings from ex-husband Reggie but might also be the key to changing the fortunes of the cash-strapped retirement home.

Star ratings:

- Richard: ●●●○○
- Mark: ●●○○○

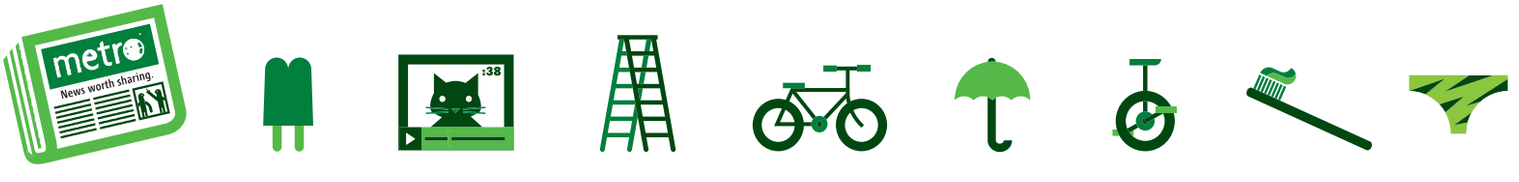
MB: The ending is horrible, one of the worst cheats in cinematic history. I was looking forward to those venerable actors tackling Verdi. But the scene I really enjoyed was Tom Courtenay teaching a class of visiting teenagers and trying to explain opera through comparisons with rap and hip-hop. But the entire plot revolves around the will-she-or-won't-she decision of Maggie Smith to join the quartet.

The script has her make that decision too blithely after resisting so vociferously. I just wasn't convinced. And she goes from imperious wit in her grand entrance to empathetic sensitivity way too quickly. The movie's not long. Maybe a few scenes were excised?

RC: It feels a bit like there was some unfortunate chopping, but I have to say overall the actors carried the day for me. Weak story and even weaker ending notwithstanding, it's a crowd pleaser.

MB: And it looks great. It was a pleasure spending 90 minutes in a perfectly groomed mansion in the English countryside. When I start to lose it, make me a reservation.

Sharability



easy hard

Horror

Mama

Director. Andres Muschietti

Stars. Jessica Chastain, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau

Tragic circumstances led to two small children (Megan Charpentier and Isabelle Nélisse) being abandoned for five years in a cabin in the woods. Rescued, they are adopted by their uncle (Game of Thrones's Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and his girlfriend (Jessica Chastain) but the question remains, who is the mysterious Mama they keep talking about? Mama has some nice subtle creepy reveals, a vivid dream sequence and, of course, the ethereal Mama, who occasionally resembles a giant hairball on the floor, but is eerie nonetheless.

RICHARD CROUSE

Action

The Last Stand

Director. Kim Jee-Woon

Stars. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Johnny Knoxville

It may have been nearly a decade since Arnold Schwarzenegger has led a big-screen blockbuster, but in The Last Stand, the sexagenarian is proving he's still got some fight in him. The threadbare story of a small-town sheriff determined to detain a drug lord from escaping into Mexico certainly doesn't break any new ground in the action department, but for fans of the genre, it's a welcome and winking return from the former Governator.

STEVE GOW

Quoted

"You know we went through a really rough time in the press and things like that back in the day. So I really felt like, 'Wow this is a great moment.'

"I am so glad for him. He deserves it. He made a great movie. He has made a couple of great movies."

Jennifer Lopez on her former "Bennifer" lover and Gigli co-star Ben Affleck winning the Golden Globe for the film Argo, which he directed.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., JAN.18 TO THURS., JAN. 24. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. COMPLETE LISTINGS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT METRONEWS.CA/MOVIES.

Southland Mall
3025 Gordon Rd., 306-585-7442

Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away 3D (G) Fri 7:10 Sat-Sun 1:20-7:10 Mon-Thu 6
The Guilt Trip (PG) Fri 9:30 Sat-Sun 4:05-9:30 Mon-Thu 8:45
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey (14A) Fri 8:15 Sat-Sun 1:15-4:45-8:15 Mon-Thu 7:30
The Impossible (14A) Fri 7-10:05 Sat-Sun 12:50-3:35-7-10:05 Mon-Thu 5:30-8:20 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Jack Reacher (PG) Fri 6:50-9:40 Sat-Sun 1-3:50-6:50-9:40 Mon-Thu 5:35-8:30
Lincoln (PG) Fri 6:30-9:50 Sat-Sun 3:20-6:30-9:50 Mon-Thu 5:10-8:15
Les Misérables (PG) Fri 8:30 Sat-Sun 1:05-4:50-8:30 Mon-Thu 7 Star & Strollers Screening Wed 1
Monsters, Inc. 3D (G) Sat-Sun 2-4:25 Mon-Thu 5:50
Parental Guidance (G) Fri 6:35 Sat-Sun 1:30-6:35 Mon-Thu 5:20
Rise of the Guardians (G) Sat-Sun 1:45-4:15 Mon-Thu 5:10
Silver Linings Playbook (14A) Fri 7:15-10:05 Sat-Sun 1:40-4:30-7:15-10:05 Mon-Thu 5:45-8:35
Skyfall (PG) Fri-Sun 6:45-9:55 Mon-Thu 7:45
Texas Chainsaw 3D (18A) Fri-Sun 7:25-10:15 Mon-Thu 8:05
The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (14A) Fri 9:15 Sat-Sun 3:55-9:15 Mon-Thu 7:55
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Sat-Sun 12:45

Galaxy Cinemas Normanview S.C.
420 McCarthy Blvd. N. Unit 26, 306-522-9098

Broken City (14A) Fri 4:40-7:15-9:50 Sat-Sun 11:30-2:05-4:40-7:15-9:50 Mon-Wed 7:20-10 Thu 7:20-10:05
Django Unchained (14A) Fri 3:25-6:55-10:30 Sat-Sun 11:55-3:25-6:55-10:30 Mon-Thu 8:30
Gangster Squad (14A) No Passes Fri 5-7:50-10:45 No Passes Sat 11:35-2:20-5-7:50-10:45 No Passes Sun 11:40-2:20-5-7:50-10:45 No Passes Mon 7:05-10:15 No Passes Tue-Thu 7:40-10:25
Hansel & Gretel: Witch Hunters 3D (18A) Thu 10
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D (14A) Fri 3-6:45-10:25 Sat-Sun 11:25-3-6:45-10:25 Mon-Thu 8
The Last Stand (14A) Fri 4:50-7:25-10:10 Sat-Sun 11:40-2:15-4:50-7:25-10:10 Mon-Thu 7:50-10:30
Life of Pi 3D (G) Fri 4:35-7:30-10:20 Sat 1:10-4:35-7:30-10:20 Sun 1:45-4:35-7:30-10:20 Mon 9:50 Tue-Wed 6:55-9:50 Thu 7:05
Looney Tunes: Back in Action (STC) Sat 11
Mama (14A) Fri 5:15-7:45-10:45 Sat 1-3:25-5:50-8:15-10:45 Sun 12:15-2:45-5:15-7:45-10:45 Mon-Wed 8:05-10:30 Thu 7:30-9:55
The Metropolitan Opera: La Clemenza Di Tito Encore (G) Mon 6:30
The Metropolitan Opera: Maria Stuarda Live (STC) Sat 11:55
Les Misérables (PG) Fri 3:05-6:30-9:55 Sat 11:40-3:05-6:30-9:55 Sun 11:45-3:05-6:30-9:55 Mon-Wed 7:30 Thu 9:40
Rise of the Guardians 3D (G) Sat 10:50 Sun 11:25
This Is 40 (14A) Fri-Sat 4-7-10:05 Sun 1-4-7-10:05 Mon-Wed 7:10-10:10 Thu 7:15-10:15
Zero Dark Thirty (14A) No Passes Fri 3:20-7:10-10:40 No Passes Sat 12:30-3:40-7:10-10:40 No Passes Sun 12-3:20-7:10-10:40 No Passes Mon-Thu 7-10:20

Kramer IMAX Theatre
2903 Powerhouse Dr., 306-522-4629
No Films Showing Today (STC) Mon
Sea Rex: Journey to a Prehistoric World 3D (STC) Fri 12:30-3 Sat-Sun 12:30-7 Tue-Thu 12:30-3-7
Skyfall: The IMAX Experience (PG) Fri 8:45 Sat-Sun 3-8:15 Tue-Thu 8:15
To the Arctic 3D (G) Fri 1:45-4:15-7:30 Sat-Sun 1:45 Tue-Thu 1:45-4:15

Paradise Cinema
1011 N. Devonshire Dr., 306-522-7888

Skyfall (PG) Fri 6:45-9:20 Sat-Sun 1:10-3:45-6:45-9:20 Mon-Thu 6:45-9:20
Wreck-It Ralph (G) Fri 7-9:30 Sat-Sun 1:30-4-7-9:30 Mon-Thu 7-9:30
Golden Mile
3806 Albert St., 306-359-5250
Argo (PG) Fri-Thu 1:15-3:45-6:30-9:30
Flight (14A) Fri-Thu 1:10-3:45-6:35-9:20
Here Comes the Boom (PG) Fri-Thu 1:25-4-6:50-9:25
Hitchcock (PG) Fri-Thu 1:40-4-6:45-9:45
Hotel Transylvania (G) Fri-Thu 1:35-3:50-6:55-9:35
Ice Age: Continental Drift (G) Fri-Thu 1:30-3:50
Pitch Perfect (PG) Fri-Thu 1:20-3:50-6:40-9:40
Red Dawn (PG) Fri-Thu 7-9:50 Thu 1
Taken 2 (PG) Fri 1:45-4:05-7:05-9:55 Sat-Sun 2-4:05-7:05-9:55 Mon-Thu 1:45-4:05-7:05-9:55

Regina Public Library Film Theatre
23 11 12th Ave., 306-777-6104

Antiviral (PG) Fri 9 Sat 7 Sun 9
Citadel (STC) Fri 7 Sat 9 Sun 7
Deadfall (14A) Thu 7
No Films Showing Today (STC) Mon-Tue
The Paperboy (14A) Thu 9
Wednesday Plus (STC) Wed 7

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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Jennifer Lopez chasing a new lover named Oscar

Jennifer Lopez's career is doing just fine, but there's at least one item she still has her heart set on: an Oscar.

"I think everybody that has ever taken acting seriously would love to be recognized in that way," Lopez tells E! News. "Of course! Why not?"

She's even good about keeping her acceptance speech up to date, should the need for it arise.

"It changes every so often over the years," Lopez says. "Different people, different things."

Jennifer Lopez.

Russell Crowe

Crowe shoots down romantic rumours

Russell Crowe has taken to Twitter to refute a New York Post story that he and burlesque star Dita Von Teese are an item.

The paper reported that the pair had enjoyed "a romantic couple's massage" at the Four Seasons hotel in New York last month and have been getting flirty.

"Dita Von Teese is brave, smart, sweet and elegant. She is a friend of mine. Who wouldn't want friends like that? Friends, not lovers," Crowe tweeted after the item appeared.

The Word

Is Lohan working as a high-paid escort?

Lindsay Lohan has reportedly found a new way to help pay off her hefty debts. Her father, Michael Lohan, and other sources claim that the troubled actress is making money working as a high-class escort, according to Star magazine.

"She is getting paid to date rich men," Michael says, putting the blame squarely on his ex-wife, Dina Lohan. "Dina is pimping her out. It's disgusting."

But so far there are no allegations of Lindsay providing any services more intimate than acting as arm candy.

"The dates last for days, and the guys pay for everything — hotel, travel costs, food, whatever — as well as jewelry and other gifts," another source tells the magazine.

Nicole Kidman. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Kidman not weirded out by peeing on Zac Efron

Nicole Kidman has been getting plenty of attention for her Golden-Globe-nominated role in the Paperboy thanks to an infamous scene in which she urinates on Zac Efron.

But Kidman doesn't get what the big deal is.

"I just don't find urination shocking. I think I peed in the beginning of Eyes Wide Shut, too. But then, I don't find a lot of things shocking. Violence is a lot more shocking than sex — sex is primal," she tells the Hollywood Reporter.

"I felt shy singing in Moulin Rouge, but peeing — no, not shy."

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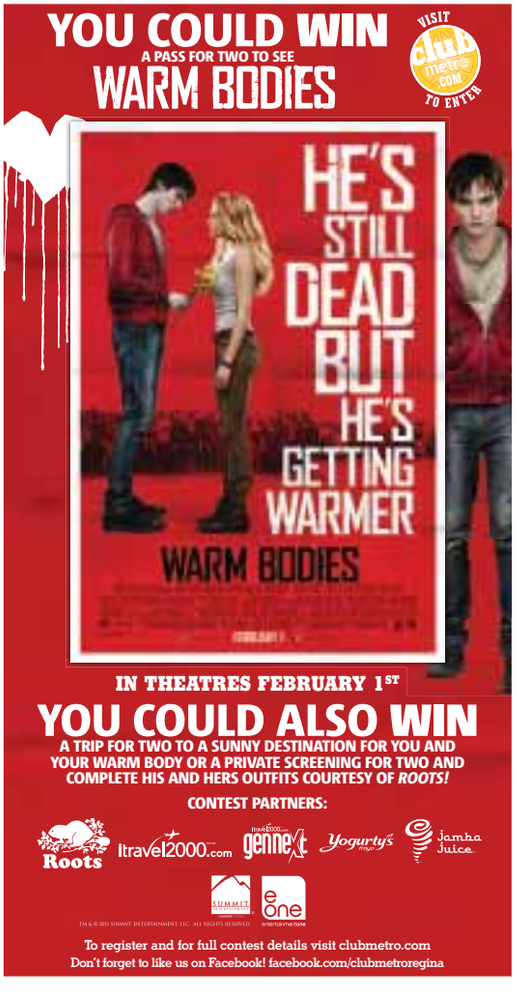
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Liquid Assets

Old and new school taste

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French wines are a lot like David Bowie. Just when you think they've got nothing new to offer, they come out of nowhere with a brand new vibe based on their old school legacy.

While Bowie has his first album in a decade dropping in March, savvy wine lovers are rediscovering the value found across France — especially in its lesser known regions like the Côtes du Rhône. Though famous for Châteauneuf-du-Pape — its liquid love letter to the pope — many wine newbies are surprised to discover that the Rhône Valley is the original home of both the red syrah (a.k.a. shiraz) and grenache grape varieties.

Grenache dominates the southern portion of the valley, where the bright-fruited berry makes up the majority of the area's blends. Most are smooth, new worldly wines with great food appeal (think everything from hearty stews and lamb to a relaxed charcuterie platter).

Famille Perrin is a regional superstar and its grenache-led 2010 Côtes du Rhône Réserve Rouge ($15.95 to $17.99) is rich and elegant with licorice and wild berry aromatics and a meaty, mouth-filling body of balanced black fruit.

PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.

Chicken and Waffles add soul to brunch

Quick eats. Good food doesn't have to take forever to prepare with this delicious recipe

This recipe serves four. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chicken and Waffles combines the best of the breakfast and dinner worlds in one soul food dish made famous by the Southern U.S.

There's even a whole chapter devoted to the meal in Fried Chicken: An American Story by John T. Edge.

In it, he writes that the dish goes back to the late 19th century, when Southern African-Americans, recently freed from slavery, began migrating to the northern United States.

According to Edge: "My guess is that it comes from the days when someone would go out in the morning and wring a chicken's neck and fry it for breakfast.

"Preparing a breakfast bread with whatever meat you have on the hoof, so to speak, comes out of the rural tradition."

The fried chicken is usually served with a waffle that is covered in butter or syrup. This version, however, is more like the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch dish, which consists of a plain waffle with pulled, stewed chicken covered in gravy.

But it's even easier than that when you use store-bought waffles and rotisserie chicken.

No frozen waffles handy? You can serve this chicken and gravy over toasted slabs of sourdough bread too.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Two 4-oz containers sliced button mushrooms
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Salt and ground black pepper
- 4 frozen waffles
- Meat from a 2-lb rotisserie chicken, warmed and shredded

1. In a large skillet over medium-high, heat the oil. Add the mushrooms, onion and garlic, then sauté until the mushrooms are browned and the pan is nearly dry, about 5 minutes.

2. Add the wine and stir to deglaze the pan. When the wine has evaporated, stir in the cream, then bring to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper, then set aside.

3. Toast the waffles according to package directions. Place one toasted waffle on each serving plate. Top with a heap of warmed, shredded chicken, then spoon ample amounts of mushroom gravy over it.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ WITH FILES FROM METRO

A flavour of one small screen kitchen

Anthony Bourdain. Celebrity chef takes on judging full time on ABC's The Taste

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Alongside Nigella Lawson, Ludo Lefebvre and Brian Malarkey, celeb chef Anthony Bourdain will judge The Taste, which pits home cooks against professional chefs in a contest where every dish is sampled blind in one bite.

How did the home cooks measure up against professional chefs?

The people that did well were aggressive with their seasoning. They were looking to make an impression and they were very forward with their flavours. We were fooled all the time with that. "Oh, this is a professional." No, it turned out. We were four very jaded palates, and I think that the cooks who figured that out were the ones who did well. These are people who've eaten a lot of food. Truffle oil is not going to work with these people. People who cooked looking for an emotional response, I think, were the ones who did well. I think we were all very emotionally involved in the progress of this show.

Were the challenges designed to take into account both types of contestants?

The challenges were all designed beforehand, and there were a couple that were geared more toward home cooks. A comfort food challenge is obviously in a zone where a home cook is just as likely to be as good at it as a professional. I'm not going to say which one, but there was one challenge where it was just a slaughterfest, where everybody across the board just really had a hard time with it, and there was a lot of weeping and rending of garments. I'm talking about the judges (laughs).

Anthony Bourdain GETTY

Two is better than one when it comes to potato pancakes

This recipe makes 18 small pancakes. MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients

- 2 lbs baking potatoes (such as russet), peeled
- 1 medium sweet potato (about 1/2 lb), peeled
- 1 small yellow onion
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- Kosher or sea salt
- Peanut oil, for frying
- Sour cream, to serve
- Applesauce, to serve

1. Fill bowl with ice water. Using medium holes on box grater, grate all potatoes, add to ice water and set aside. Use fine holes on grater to grate onion.

2. Drain potatoes well, squeezing out as much water as possible. In bowl, combine potatoes with onion. Squeeze again to remove as much moisture as possible. To do this, grab mix, a handful at a time, squeeze over the sink and transfer to a dry bowl. When all of mix has been squeezed, add eggs, flour and a bit of salt (start with 1/2 teaspoon.) Mix well and set aside.

3. In a large, deep sauté pan over medium-high, heat about 1/4 inch peanut oil to 360 F. To test oil, drop pinch of flour into oil. If ready, flour should sizzle and brown almost immediately. While oil heats, set wire rack over rimmed baking sheet. Heat oven to 350 F.

4. Working in batches and using 3 tablespoons of potato mix per pancake, drop batter into oil. Do not crowd pan. Flatten each with spatula and fry for 4 mins. per side, or until golden and crisp. As you fry, you may need to add oil to pan. Return to temperature between batches and additions of oil.

5. As pancakes finish, transfer to wire rack. Once all pancakes are fried, place them (rack and baking sheet) in oven and heat 5 mins., or until warmed through. To serve, sprinkle lightly with salt and accompany with sour cream and applesauce. **THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ELIZABETH KARMEL, GRILLING AND SOUTHERN FOODS EXPERT AND AUTHOR OF SOAKED, SLATHERED AND SEASONED.**

Turkey Chili. Serve with rice or mashed potatoes

1. In slow cooker stoneware, combine all of ingredients except for the garnishes. Cook on high for 4 to 6 hours or on low for 8 to 10 hours, depending on your schedule.

2. Open lid for last 45 minutes of cooking to thicken, if desired. Mash squash with the back of a wooden spoon for additional thickening. **THE CANADIAN PRESS/CROCK-POT**

Ingredients

- 1 onion, carrot and celery stalk, chopped
- 500 ml (2 cups) each of chopped cored apples and diced butternut squash
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 500 g (1 lb) ground turkey, cooked
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) chili powder
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) ground cumin
- 5 ml (1 tsp) dried oregano
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) each salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 can (284 ml/10 oz) undiluted chicken broth
- 1 can (400 ml) light coconut milk
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) tomato paste
- 250 ml (1 cup) canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- Coconut flakes and cilantro, for garnish

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*Price reflects minimum 6 month commitment, billed monthly, only at participating locations.
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Christmas Tree Depot
December 28 - February 1
Treecycle
• Remove tree from bag or wrap
• Remove any decorations or other materials from tree
• Your tree will be turned into useful landscaping material
Locations:
City of Regina Landfill
Sandra Schmirler Leisure Centre
Optimist Arena
Goulet Golf Course
City of Regina Container Shop
3130 East Woodhams Drive
222 Sunset Drive
8045 Kestral Drive
500 Arcola Avenue
Regina.ca
City of Regina | REGINA

Let the (on-ice) games begin

48-game dash. After all the negotiations, teams with little turnover may have leg up in shortened season

The 48-game sprint of a hockey season hasn't even started, and NHL players are already winded.

There is very little in terms of a blueprint on how to prep for a lockout-shortened season that will be crammed into just 99 days after less than a week of training camp.

But ready or not, the puck will drop on Saturday and there is a small margin of error as every game now carries extra weight.

"It's not a grind. We want this," said Columbus Blue Jackets president of hockey operations John Davidson, a former NHL goalie. "We've been waiting months for this, to have this puck drop and hear the skates, bodies banging and guys with lots of energy.

"Coaches have had months and months and months to get ready. It's all good."

Teams aren't flying completely blind because this is the second time a long NHL lockout forced a season to be cut from 82 games to 48 per team. Back in 1995, the New Jersey Devils and Detroit Red Wings made the most of their opportunities and reached the Stanley Cup final.

"It feels like we just came out of an All-Star break or something like that. We've got the same team," Phoenix Coyotes coach Dave Tippett said. "The guys understand what we're trying to do. We don't have to put a lot of time explaining terms or what we're going to do."

The Pittsburgh Penguins are trying to tap into the past to get a leg up now. Player development coach Bill Guerin was a member of those 1995 Devils, who got into the playoffs as the No. 5 seed in the Eastern Conference and rode the wave to a sweep of the Red Wings for the championship.

"They didn't start well. They were starting under .500 their first segment," Penguins coach Dan Bylsma said. "They were a team that did have a lot of veteran experience, and we've talked to Billy about his experience, and how the team came back, and how they rotated players in and out of the lineup, how the goalie was played, what the talk in training camp was."

History suggests clubs that rush into this season without having to rely on nametags might already have an edge.

"We can look at that as a positive for sure," Penguins captain Sidney Crosby said. "Guys understand their roles and what they need to do, and there's trust there. Maybe with some newer guys you have to develop that a little bit more, but I would say it can't hurt. It certainly helps a little bit to have that familiarity."

The Buffalo Sabres are in a similar position. Even though they failed to reach the playoffs last season, they are returning a core of players that surged to a 15-5-4 finish that left them just short of a postseason spot.

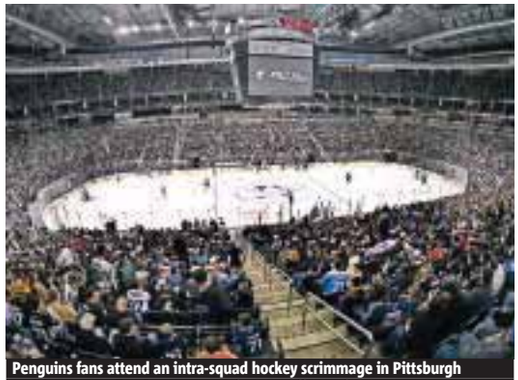
Only Brad Boyes isn't back with this crew of hungry Sabres. Buffalo coach Lindy Ruff doesn't have to teach his system, so his focus this week has been on conditioning and getting his club ready to jump into game action.

"We're going to concentrate on trying to ramp up tuning the body and getting ready for a real hard compete," he said.

Ruff, who has been behind the Sabres bench since 1997, can harken back to his own experience as an assistant coach in 1995 with the Florida Panthers.

"I remember going into it, you just thought every game meant so much," Ruff said. "I think what you have to really be careful of is not putting too much into the wins and not putting too much into the losses.

"Try to keep a pretty level ground." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Penguins fans attend an intra-squad hockey scrimmage in Pittsburgh on Wednesday. The Pens may not feel the effects of a shortened season as much as other teams, having had little turnover with their roster.

GENE J. PUSKAR/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Survey results

Canadian hockey fans loyal to NHL, poll finds

NHL commissioner Gary Bettman's assessment of the loyalty of hockey fans appears to be borne out by a new poll, at least for the hardcore north of the 49th parallel.

The Canadian Press Harris-Decima survey suggests a strong majority of Canadian hockey followers will keep watching when NHL games return this weekend after a three-month lockout by team owners.

The poll found that two out of three respondents — 66 per cent — say they'll watch about the same amount of hockey as in the past, while just under one in four — 23 per cent — say they'll watch less.

"I think the poll supports the conventional wisdom of the fans, that the lockout has hurt the game," said pollster Allan Gregg, chairman of Harris-Decima.

"Who it's going to really, really hurt is the occasional fan, and that's not an insignificant chunk of the total population."

The NHL's third lockout in 20 years prompted a lot of loud complaints that the game's best customers were being taken for granted and led to threats of fan boycotts.

Yet among the most avid NHL followers, the survey found that 69 per cent said they'll watch about the same amount of hockey.

The pressure will be on John Tortorella to get the most from his Rangers, who added all-star forward Rick Nash to their attack after finishing first in the Eastern Conference last season. JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES FILE

Less than a cup won't be enough

Only one winner.
Handful of teams have gone all-in looking for chance at Stanley Cup

The New York Rangers made a big push in trading for Rick Nash to improve their chances of winning a championship for the first time since 1994.

"It's the right time for him to be here with us," Rangers coach John Tortorella said.

On the opposite side of the continent, the Vancouver Canucks can't wait to resume the franchise's quest for its first cup when the lockout-delayed season starts Saturday night at home against Anaheim.

The Chicago Blackhawks and Pittsburgh Penguins are also feeling a sense of urgency to win it all again.

And advancing one round in the playoffs isn't enough anymore for the Nashville Predators, who raised the stakes by matching a 14-year, $110-million contract to keep star defenceman Shea Weber.

Even though the Predators don't have the best defensive pair in the league anymore, with Ryan Suter joining fellow free agent Zach Parise in Minnesota, Nashville expects to try for more than just a third straight trip to the Western Conference semifinals.

"Without a doubt, the ultimate goal is the Stanley Cup," said Weber, who was wooed by the Philadelphia Flyers with a long and lucrative offer sheet as a restricted free agent last summer.

"And to do that, you have to make the post-season. Anything can happen, as we all witnessed with Los Angeles last year."

The Kings, seeded eighth, started by knocking off the top-seeded Canucks in the West and finished with a 6-1 rout of the New Jersey Devils in Game 6 of the final.

That's why Detroit Red Wings general manager Ken Holland, who is hoping to help the franchise extend its post-season streak, said it's not realistic for there to be a lot of pressure on any one team to win it all.

"The cup contenders will be the 16 teams that make the playoffs," Holland said while watching his team prepare on the ice earlier this week for a 48-game regular season.

"The eighth seed won the Stanley Cup against the sixth from the East. The days in the 1990s and early 2000s when the top teams had easier runs in the early rounds are over."

It won't be pretty, though, in some cities if the results are anything short of a championship.

The Rangers made a long run in the post-season, six games into the Eastern Conference final against New Jersey.

The Rangers also played in the Eastern Conference final in 1997. Those two post-seasons are the team's longest since beating the Canucks in Game 7 of the 1994 Stanley Cup final. That was the year before the last lockout-shortened season.

New York led the East with 109 points last season with Marian Gaborik and Brad Richards leading up front and goaltender Henrik Lundqvist having the best year of his career. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"It's wide open, and that's the beauty of the league."

Detroit Red Wings general manager Ken Holland

Expected to be exceptional

Shortened training camps are nearing an end for the NHL's 30 teams as they prepare for the truncated regular season. The puck drops on Saturday. Here is a look at six NHLers to watch this season:

THE CANADIAN PRESS

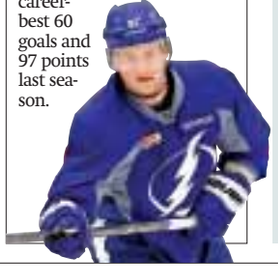
Photos by The Canadian Press/The Associated Press/Getty Images

Sidney Crosby

Sid's not a kid anymore. The Penguins centre is 25 now and hoping to stay healthy this year. Crosby missed most of the last two seasons due to post-concussion syndrome. He posted impressive numbers in limited action last season (37 points in just 22 games) and says he's no longer dealing with concussion-like symptoms.

Steven Stamkos

Stamkos has been a rock for Tampa Bay since the Lightning selected him with the first overall pick of the 2008 draft. He had 46 points as a rookie before blossoming as a sophomore with 51 goals and 95 points. Stamkos has kept up the pace with 91 points in 2010-11 and a career-best 60 goals and 97 points last season.

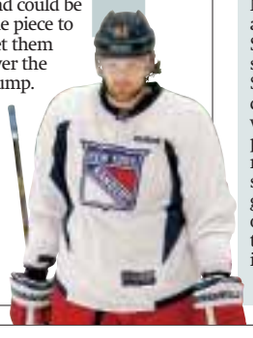


Cory Schneider

The goaltending drama is an evolving soap opera in Vancouver and it's showing no signs of slowing down. Schneider took over the starting spot from Roberto Luongo and is a good bet to see the bulk of the playing time this season. Schneider posted a 20-8-1 record last season with a 1.96 goals-against average. He'll be eager to prove he deserves his status as the team's go-to guy in net.

Rick Nash

The Broadway spotlight will be shining on the five-time all-star forward, who finally gets a crack at playing for a contender after years in Columbus. Nash was dealt to the Rangers last summer and could be the piece to get them over the hump.



Zach Parise

Minnesota landed top free agents Parise and Ryan Suter in the off-season, signing them to whopping $98-million US, 13-year deals. Season-ticket sales went up along with expectations. The Wild have missed the playoffs for four straight seasons. Parise gives the team a consistent offensive weapon and he thrives when the pressure is on.

Henrik Zetterberg

Talk about big shoes to fill. Zetterberg will wear the "C" for Detroit with previous captain Nicklas Lidstrom retired. Zetterberg is coming off a team-leading 69-point campaign. Zetterberg's main goal is leading the Red Wings to the playoffs for the 22nd straight season.

WHL

Pats host two weekend games

The Regina Pats will be looking to pick up a couple of wins at home this weekend.

Up first, the Pats (18-24-2-2) face off against the Kootenay Ice, who currently sit third last in the WHL's Eastern Conference with a 19-25-1-0 record.

The puck drops Friday at 7 p.m. at the Brandt Centre.

On Saturday, the Pats play host to Swift Current. The Broncos are one of the stronger teams in the Eastern Conference, with a 22-20-3-2 record. The game gets under way at 7 p.m. at the Brandt Centre. METRO

CFL

Riders sign two familiar faces

The Saskatchewan Roughriders have signed running back Stephfon Green and defensive back Ramzee Robinson.

Green returns to the Roughriders after spending the final two weeks of the 2012 season on the team's practice roster. The 23-year-old spent 2012 training camp with the Detroit Lions, registering seven carries for 95 yards and a touchdown in two pre-season games.

The New York native spent four seasons at Penn State, finishing his collegiate career with 285 rushing attempts for 1,351 yards and 14 touchdowns and added another 457 yards on 40 pass receptions.

Robinson also returns to the Riders after spending time on the team's practice roster during the 2012 season. The 28-year-old previously spent time with Denver, Cleveland, Washington and Philadelphia throughout his NFL tenure. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Australian Open

Kerber wins on 25th birthday

Fifth-seeded Angelique Kerber celebrated her 25th birthday Friday with a 6-2, 7-5 win over American teenager Madison Keys in a third-round match at the Australian Open.

The German player broke Keys' serve to love in the 11th game of the second set.

Kerber is the only player in the WTA's top 10 who has not played in a Grand Slam final — her best results so far in a major have been the semifinals at the 2011 U.S. Open and 2012 Wimbledon.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dual-threat dilemma for Falcons vs. Kaepernick

Conference championships. 49ers QB faces Falcons after he ran wild on Packers

Atlanta Falcons Tony Gonzalez, front centre, leads teammates Julio Jones, left, Roddy White and other Falcons to their indoor practice facility in Flowery Branch, Ga., on Wednesday. The Falcons' offence want to keep the ball in their hands and out of the hands of versatile 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick.

DAVID TULIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michael Turner's trademark high-pitched laugh filled the Falcons' locker room.

Asked about San Francisco quarterback Colin Kaepernick, Turner grinned Thursday and said, "I'm glad I'm not on defence."

Turner, the big running back, and the Falcons' offence want to hold the ball and limit Kaepernick's time on the field in Sunday's NFC championship game.

The Falcons have seen enough in Kaepernick's eight starts to respect the versatile quarterback with the long stride and strong right arm.

Kaepernick comes to Atlanta after running for 181 yards — an NFL record for a quarterback — with two touchdowns in last week's win over Green Bay. He also threw for 263 yards with two touchdowns. He became the third QB, after Otto Graham and Jay Cutler, to run and throw for at least two touchdowns in a post-season game.

The Falcons are impressed, even after facing such other dual-threat quarterbacks as Robert Griffin III, Cam Newton and Russell Wilson this season.

Linebacker Sean Weatherspoon says Kaepernick is unique.

"I think he's just a different guy altogether," Weatherspoon said. "He's a taller guy, obviously. He broke the record last week, so that makes him special and different. I think he has a lot more speed. Russell is more of a quick guy. Colin is a faster guy."

Wilson and Griffin are scramblers. Kaepernick looks more like a 200-meter sprinter with his unusually long stride.

Kaepernick has avoided the big hits that have made it difficult for such other running quarterbacks as Griffin and Michael Vick to avoid injuries.

He said his strategy is "Run where they're not."

Kaepernick's big game last week earned him the promise of more attention from the Falcons' defence.

Falcons coach Mike Smith said he is preparing for the 49ers' "traditional offence that we're used to seeing" as well as the pistol formation with read-option plays that Kaepernick ran in college at Nevada.

"We're going to have to be prepared to stop him," Smith said. "We're going to see things we haven't seen in terms of what they'll do with their formations."

"We definitely have to have somebody accounting for him," said safety Thomas DeCoud, adding defensive backs have to be ready to leave their assignments to help contain Kaepernick's runs.

"Last week we kind of bought into plastering the receivers if (Wilson) broke containment because of the fact he likes to find the open receivers," DeCoud said. "This week, we'll have to be cognizant of maybe coming off coverage if he crosses the line of scrimmage to thwart him making a big play on us."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AFC championship

- New England gets a chance to extend its mastery in the final step to the Super Bowl on Sunday against Baltimore, the team the Patriots beat a year ago for the conference crown.
- That win made them 4-0 in home conference title games.

Armstrong comes clean to Oprah on TV

Lance Armstrong, right, celebrates winning bronze in the men's individual time trials at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, with gold-medallist Viacheslav Ekimov, centre, and silver-medallist Jan Ullrich. LAURENT REBOURS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Lance Armstrong confessed to using performance-enhancing drugs to win the Tour de France during an interview with Oprah Winfrey, reversing more than a decade of denial.

"Yes," Armstrong said when Winfrey asked if he used a series of drugs to help his record run.

Said Armstrong: "I made my decisions. They are my mistake."

Sitting in a chair across from Winfrey, Armstrong said he could not have won the race seven times without the drugs and gave a small smile.

Armstrong was stripped of all his titles in the wake of a U.S. Anti-Doping Agency report last October and banned for life from competing in triathlons and other sanctioned events. He also lost nearly all his sponsors and left the Livestrong cancer charity he founded in 1997.

The interview was taped Monday.

Also on Thursday, the Associated Press reported the International Olympic Committee had sent a letter to Armstrong Wednesday asking him to return his bronze medal from the 2000 Sydney Olympics, as it said it planned to do last month.

The IOC executive board discussed revoking the medal in December, but delayed a decision until cycling's governing body notified Armstrong he was stripped of his seven Tour de France titles and all results since 1998. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Medal ride

Two months after winning his second Tour de France title in 2000, Armstrong took the bronze in Sydney in the road time trial behind winner and U.S. Postal Service teammate Viacheslav Ekimov of Russia and Jan Ullrich of Germany.

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
Certain goals may seem to be out of your reach but they are not. The planets are urging you not just to aim high but to aim higher than ever before. All things are possible if you want them enough.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You seem reluctant to put your point of view across. Why is that? If you have something of value to say, you have not just a right but a responsibility to speak up. So speak up.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
It may appear as if someone you work or do business with has been cheating you but can you be sure? The planets warn you cannot trust your senses today, so err on the side of caution and don't make accusations.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You won't have any trouble getting others to back your ideas today but you may be in trouble later on if they don't work out the way you expected. For that reason alone make it clear there are no guarantees.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Some kind of habit is holding you back and it's time you got past it. Simply stopping won't do it — you've tried that before. The trick is to replace a bad habit by a good habit.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Avoid poking fun at people in positions of power, no matter how tempting it may be. Laughter is only the best medicine if it is the kind that everyone can share in. Anything else could be dangerous today.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Don't take what you are told at face value. Check the facts for yourself. What others say may sound convincing but more likely it's just self-serving. Do your homework and avoid making costly mistakes.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You may be resentful that changes of one sort or another have been forced on you but there is no point making a fuss. The best you can do is to go with the flow and not draw attention to yourself.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Resist the temptation to talk up the facts as others may see that as a form of deception. It may be easy enough to do but in the long-term you will regret it. Protect your reputation for honesty at all costs.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The planets warn that your powers of intuition are on the blink and not to be trusted, at least for the next 24 hours. Stick to what you know to be true and in other matters be exceptionally cautious.

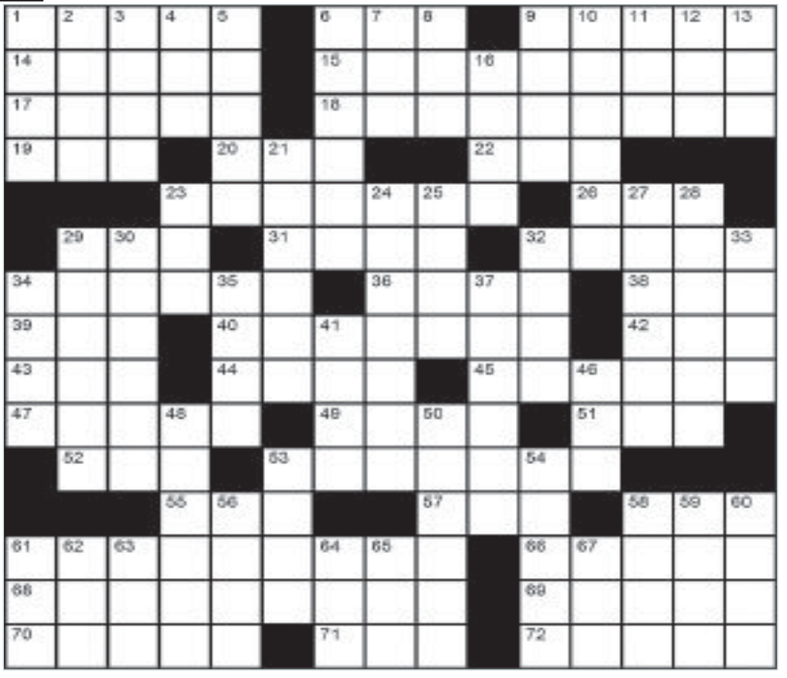
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Try not to let your fears get out of hand over the next 24 hours. Take your mind off your worries by focusing on all the things you have to be thankful for. That should keep you busy for a while.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Those who think highly of you will help you out in any way they can today, but first you must ask. The Sun's link to communications planet Mercury means your wish is their command. So wish away.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

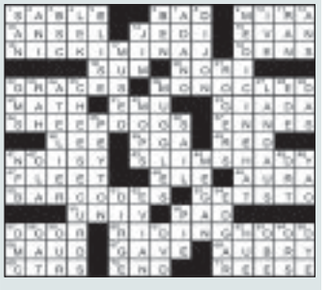
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Toronto __ Centre
6. Task
9. "__ la vista, baby." - The Terminator
14. CBC's "Republic of __"
15. BC's Revelstoke, for one: 2 wds.
17. Taylor Swift's "_ __ You Were Trouble"
18. On the costume of Bruce Wayne's alter ego: 2 wds.
19. 'Legal' suffix
20. Extinct bird
22. "The Simpsons" storekeeper
23. Reporter on "etalk", Traci __
26. Got [abbr.]
29. Jolt
31. Herring-like fish
32. Open court hearings
34. Formula
36. Endorse
38. Mr. Reed
39. __-locka, Florida
40. Ducks city
42. 'Serpent' suffix
43. Psychedelic†drug
44. Not is
45. __, Nova Scotia
47. Pretend
49. Destiny's Child hit: "Say My __"
51. Bronze Roman money
52. 'Part' add-on (Collaborator)
53. "Deuce __: Male Gigolo"
55. Green tropical fruit ...partially eaten here
57. Irish actor Stephen
58. Li'l accounting review
61. Green-haired Canadian icon: 3 wds.
66. Jennifer or Meg
68. The Glass __ (Tennessee Williams play)
69. US Supreme Court Justice Ms. Kagan
70. Fraternity letter
71. Wine aperitif
72. Singer/songwriter Sarah

Down
1. Ms. Falco
2. Says it's hunky-dory
3. Actress Ms. Daly
4. Grand Opry link
5. "Brand __ __" by Alicia Keys
6. German composer, in brief: _._. __ (b.1685 - d.1750)
7. Quebec-made cheese
8. Smidgen
9. Rope fiber
10. Bruce Springsteen album: 'Greetings from __ Park N.J.'
11. Pine-__
12. Green Day drummer, __ Cool
13. 24-hr. banker
16. Back
21. Mary-Kate and Ashley
23. Hosp. picture
24. Twitter's #
25. Garfield's pal
27. Chanteuse Ms. Dion
28. Pilotless aircrafts
29. Carly Rae __
30. Evangeline: A Tale of __ (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem)
32. Les Miz song: "__ Own": 2 wds.
33. Chop __
34. Massage for therapy
35. Rapper T-__
37. Ms. Bundchen
41. Years, in old Rome
46. Stealing bird
48. Alexander __ Bell
50. Sharpie product
53. Music systems company
54. Hall & __
56. "Luka" singer Suzanne
58. Helm position
59. Forearm bone
60. Ms. Cannon
61. First aid team [acronym]
62. Agnus __ (Mass prayer)
63. 1987 to 1994 'Star Trek' series, to fans
64. Mork's planet
65. Nero's 102
67. __-advised

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

9								1
	4	6				9	3	
			5	1	9			
		2	9	4	3	1		
7	3						2	9
		9	2	8	7	3		
			7	2	4			
	8	7				5	4	
6								2

Yesterday's Sudoku

4	9	1	8	6	2	5	7	3
8	2	5	3	4	7	6	1	9
6	7	3	9	5	1	8	2	4
3	1	9	4	7	5	2	8	6
5	6	7	2	8	3	4	9	1
2	4	8	6	1	9	7	3	5
7	3	6	5	9	8	1	4	2
1	5	2	7	3	4	9	6	8
9	8	4	1	2	6	3	5	7

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